

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NIAMEY 01515 161041Z

13

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 EB-11 COME-00 INT-08 FEA-02

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FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7830

INFO AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 1515

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EMIN, NG

SUBJECT: PANOCEAN DISCUSSES NIGER URANIUM CONCESSION

1. LOCAL CIDA REPRESENTATIVE DUBUC FILLED ME IN ON DISCUSSIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE LAST WEEK BETWEEN PANOCEAN AND GON CONCERNING URANIUM CONCESSION. DUBUC WAS NOT PRESENT AT DISCUSSIONS BUT WAS GIVEN ACCOUNT BY PANOCEAN LAWYER WILLIAME GRAHAM. NET RESULT WAS REQUEST TO PANOCEAN FROM MAJOR SANI (MINISTER OF MINES) TO DEFER FURTHER EXPENDITURES IN NIGER SINCE SMC INTENDED REVIEW COMMERCIAL AGREEMENTS SIGNED UNDER FORMER REGIME.

2. ACCORDING TO DUBUC, PANOCEAN ALSO INTERESTED IN SOME AREAS UNDER CONSIDERATION BY EXXON SUBSIDIARY. PANOCEAN LAWYER IN LATER MEETING WITH COL KOUNTACHE SOUGHT TO PUT FORTH IDEA OF POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES TO NIGER FROM DEALING WITH SMALLER COMPANY RATHER THAN QUOTE GIANTMULTINATIONAL UNQUOTE. GRAHAM ALSO WISHED TO ASSURE GON THAT PANOCEAN HAD FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES TO CARRY OUT PROJECT SATISFACTORILY. ACCORDING TO GRAHAM, THERE WERE HINTS FROM COL DOUNTCHE THAT THERE MIGHT BE MORE ADVANTAGES TO PANOCEAN
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PAGE 02 NIAMEY 01515 161041Z

IF HIS COMPANY COULD WORK OUT SOME ARRANGEMENT

WITH FRENCH RATHER THAN GO IT ALONE.

3. DUBUC SAID GRAHAM ADMITTED HE NOT ABSOLUTELY SURE HE PUT CORRECT INTERPRETATION ON KOUNTCHE'S REMARKS SINCE HE MAY HAVE BEEN MERELY REFERRING TO USE OF FRENCH TECHNICAL EXPERIENCE IN AREA RATHER THAN ADVOCATING PARTNERSHIP.

4. GRAHAM SIAD FOR TIME BEING PANOCEAN WOULD WAIT TO SEE HOW THINGS DEVELOPED. HE WAS NONCOMMITTAL ON QUESTION BY DUBUC WHETHER PANOCEAN WOULD RESIST TAKING FRENCH PARTNER.
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